Strategic Priority Descriptions

Note that UWEO uses an equity lens and prioritizes programs that reach Indigenous Peoples and equity deserving groups, including, but not limited to:

- Members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community
- Francophones
- Minority language populations
- Minority faith communities
- New Canadians, immigrants, and refugees
- People living in poverty
- People with disabilities
- Racialized groups
- Rural communities
- Vulnerable seniors and caregivers
- Women and girls

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Agency Capacity Building

Strategic priority description	**The social services sector has a greater capacity to meet community needs and change more lives***
Addressing systemic change	Strong and healthy service delivery partners are critical to making measurable progress in achieving strategic priorities. Enhancing the organizational capacity of service delivery partners also strengthens the capacity of the networks and partnerships through which they collaborate, thereby creating a more robust social service sector.
Funding categories and examples	Applicants in this category should have an organizational mandate to build the capacity of other agencies and be recognized for such in the community. The program/project should advance one or more of UWEO's other priorities. Types of organizational capacity to target can include: • Programmatic Capacity: Projects geared towards improving program quality, changing more lives, engaging more volunteers, and addressing common priority issues. • Resource Development Capacity: Capacity building initiatives or social enterprises which help agencies in securing additional resources (cash or in-kind) leveraged to support strategic priorities and improve financial sustainability. • Networking/Partnership/Coalition Capacity: Programs and initiatives which build capacity of networks and coalitions to undertake Collective Impact initiatives and change more lives. • Internal Operations and Management Capacity: Support for sector in areas such as HR, finance, project management, governance, and infra-structure. Examples: Projects for building capacity of board members, creating skill development opportunities for staff, improving recruitment, training and retention of staff and volunteers, and increasing organizational capacity to represent the interest of target population. • Research and Evaluation Capacity: Programs and activities that increase the ability to lead research in support of strategic priorities; studies with practical and actionable recommendations for Collective Impact initiatives; and progress on developing shared measurement systems and effective cross-sector coordination.
*This funding is not intended for agencies to build up their internal capacity. It is for agencies to use to build capacity in other agencies or coalitions.	

Crisis Supports

Strategic priority description	People in crisis have access to coordinated and immediate supports
Addressing systemic change	In addition to upstream prevention efforts, crisis supports will always be required to serve our community. In order to ensure these supports are available and effective, there must be: • Enough linguistically and culturally appropriate crisis support to meet the needs of different populations • Some crisis supports available 24/7 • Awareness in the community of where to find help in accessing support

Funding categories and examples	• Programs and services that provide immediate response to clients' crisis states, feelings of hopelessness, and stress
	    Example: A supportive helpline for people in distress
	
	• Programs that reduce barriers to accessing information, support, and services aimed at addressing crisis
	    Example: Financial literacy workshops
	
	• Advocacy for increased public awareness about the availability of crisis supports and services
	    Example: An awareness campaign in remote rural areas advertising virtual helpline services
	
	• Research to identify, track, and refer frequent users and number of frequent users of crisis services in Ottawa
	    Example: Asset or resource mapping

Mental Health & Addictions

Strategic priority description	People experiencing mental health and / or addictions challenges have access to coordinated community-based supports
Addressing systemic change	Due to factors like the family doctor shortage and fear of stigma, many people often delay seeking support for mental health and addictions issues. Reducing barriers and increasing access to community-based supports can make an enormous difference over a lifetime. The ability to identify issues and intervene early through a coordinated, integrated, and culturally-appropriate service delivery system is instrumental in creating an inclusive and supportive community.

Funding categories and examples	• Programs and Services that are community-based and promote healing, resilience, and recovery for those affected by mental health and addictions issues
	    Examples: Individual counselling, peer support programs, group therapy workshops
	
	• Research that identifies gaps and/or evidence informed practices in community-based mental health support and services
	    Examples: Environmental scan, survey assessment tools
	
	• Convening of stakeholders to support a more integrated community response to mental health and addictions supports
	    Example: Reinforcement or development of ongoing shared processes and outcome monitoring to promote program improvement
	
	• Advocacy initiatives that aim to reduce barriers within a community-based mental health and addictions service delivery model

Addictions refers to all manner of addictive behavior including, but not limited to, problematic substance or technology use, gambling, gaming, etc. It should be noted that United Way East Ontario may place more emphasis on one or more types in its calls for proposals.

Mental health and addictions supports refers to investment in community-based supports targeted at those faced with challenges of low to moderate episodic severity. This may include people with 'severe but manageable' conditions that need occasional support. Community-based programs and services are accessible in the communities where people live, are non-institutional in nature and include supports for people with undiagnosed mental illness.

Successful Aging

Strategic priority description	**The well-being of seniors is improved by reducing the factors that lead to isolation and vulnerability, while respecting their independence**
Addressing systemic change	The demographics of the Canadian population are changing and there will be a dramatic growth in the number of seniors over the coming years. It will be imperative that, as we prepare for the role that vulnerability will play for a rapidly aging population, all levels of government, funders, and service delivery partners work together to address the issue.

Funding categories and examples	• Programs, projects, and initiatives aimed at reducing isolation and vulnerability of seniors, while supporting their independence
	    Examples: Cultural social clubs for seniors, activity-based groups to promote physical activity
	
	• Caregiver support programs and initiatives
	    Example: Respite supports for caregivers
	
	• Convening of stakeholders to share knowledge and best practices, coordinate resources, reduce duplication, address gaps, and/or encourage collaboration
	    Example: Actions to implement the recommendations from a collective strategy to support senior and caregiver well-being
	
	• Advocacy, in partnership with seniors, for effective strategies that reduce factors leading to vulnerability and isolation and promote seniors' well-being

Strong Neighbourhoods

Strategic priority description	**Healthy and vibrant communities are created through increasing equity, social cohesion, and inclusion**
Addressing systemic change	Engagement of residents is critical to the sustained improvement of neighbourhoods and rural communities. Effective neighbourhood strategies can reduce the negative impact of vulnerable neighbourhoods through a three-pronged approach: • Concretely improving the neighbourhood/rural community conditions, • Mitigating the negative effects of poor conditions, and • Increasing meaningful social capital and resident leadership.

Funding categories and examples	• Programs, projects, social enterprises, and activities that support community engagement and resident capacity-building. Programs should increase a sense of belonging, social cohesion, and/or address social/economic exclusion and inequity by building trust across diverse communities and service sectors
	    Examples: Community programming for specific cultural groups, leadership training for residents to improve civic engagement
	
	• Collective impact approaches which engage stakeholders from across governments and organizations to work on a common agenda and coordinate resources, data, and communications through a backbone organization
	    Examples: Convening a collective of residents and local policy makers to address a concern like food insecurity
	
	• Research on neighbourhood well-being, inequity across neighbourhoods, and other place-based/local community research areas
	    Example: Data visualization tools

Critical Hours

Strategic priority description	**Children and youth are active and engaged**
Addressing systemic change	The links between school success and healthy participation in activities outside of school hours are clear. Research has demonstrated that the more access a child or youth has to positive activities during these "critical hours" outside of school hours, the higher their chance of success in school and life.

Funding categories and examples	Programs should target youth aged 6 to 18.
	
	• Social recreation
	     Example: After school activities at a youth hub
	
	• Mentorship
	     Example: Peer-led programming in after school clubs
	
	• Academic support programs
	     Examples: Homework clubs, tutoring sessions
	
	• Life skills and competencies, including employment programming
	     Examples: Job skills workshops, career planning and job placement programs for equity-deserving youth

School Readiness

Strategic priority description	**Healthy and resilient children are ready to learn**
Addressing systemic change	Living in safe and caring environments, having basic needs met, providing opportunities to develop competencies, and having stable and nurturing relationships are the significant pre-conditions to healthy physical, emotional, cognitive, and social growth in children.

Funding categories and examples	Programs should target children and their caregivers from pre-natal stages to age 6.
	
	• Support for vulnerable parents
	    Example: childcare supports for young mothers attending skill building workshops
	
	• Programs that increase parental/caregiver awareness of, and improved infant and child development in, one or more of the following areas:
	    – Physical health and well-being,
	    – Social Competence,
	    – Emotional Maturity,
	    – Language and Cognitive development,
	    – Communication skills and general knowledge
	
	• Skill development for children through play and parental interaction
	    Example: infant or pre-school age play groups

Youth Homelessness

Strategic priority description	Children and youth experiencing homelessness receive support
Addressing systemic change	A coordinated, integrated, and youth-appropriate response is necessary to address youth homelessness in our region. In addition to advocating for a continuum of youth-appropriate housing options, youth need supports related to employment, school success, mental health counseling, and life-skills development to have a healthy transition into adulthood.
Funding categories and examples	Programs should target youth aged 16 to 25 who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. It is recognized that, for certain youth and populations of youth (such as those who are developmentally delayed), this age range may be higher. • Programs and initiatives that will prevent or reduce homelessness for at-risk youth through early intervention, long-term supports, and/or services • Programs, services, or social enterprises that lead to employment for homeless youth • Programs and services that support reconnection with families, where appropriate • Programs and services using youth-appropriate Housing First approaches; when transitional housing[1] services are offered, evidence must be included to demonstrate that they are aimed at realizing permanent and stable housing[2] • Collective impact initiatives and activities that support system changes to homelessness policies as they relate to a youth-appropriate Housing First approach *Note: United Way East Ontario does not provide Community Funding for capital investments or for rent supplements, allowances, or subsidies.* *Note: For programs, services, and social enterprises that lead to employment for homeless youth, employment is required to: adhere to Ontario Labour Standards (i.e. minimum wage or greater, health and safety standards, etc.); ensure dignity of choice; and foster an inclusive workplace and/or community.*

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[1] **Transitional Housing** is a time-limited supportive or supported housing where people at-risk of homelessness prepare for permanent housing.

[2] **Permanent housing** refers to housing that does not come with any limitations or requirements, i.e. a maximum length of stay, a maximum age, a requirement to enroll in a program or to receive a service, etc. Any transitional housing contributing to this goal must have the goal of its clients moving into permanent housing. This definition would be subject to additions or changes as determined by an eventual Housing First for youth framework developed with the community. All housing referred to must be affordable to the tenant.

Employment For Newcomers

Strategic priority description	Employment and labour market outcomes are improved for newcomers[3]
Addressing systemic change	Access to employment opportunities is a vital building–block for full participation in society. In addition to programs supporting job seekers, employers need access to best practices about how to adapt their workplaces to better enable the recruitment, placement, and retention of immigrants in their workplaces and gain a better understanding of cross-cultural competencies to make their workplaces more inclusive.

Funding categories and examples	• Programs and projects that lead to employment and improved labour market outcomes, including investments in:
	   – Employment related social enterprises
	   – School to work transition for youth
	   – Job finding and retention (including workplace support)
	   – Career mentorship, counseling, and coaching
	   – Workshops and education for employers about adapting their workplaces to better integrate newcomers
	
	• Research into best practices, tools, and promising approaches to improve labour market outcomes and to develop employer case studies on the benefits of creating inclusive workplaces
	
	Note: For programs, services, and social enterprises that lead to employment, employment is required to: adhere to Ontario Labour Standards (i.e. minimum wage or greater, health and safety standards, etc.); ensure dignity of choice; and foster an inclusive workplace and/or community.

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[3] Newcomers include immigrants, refugees, and new Canadians aged 15 and over who are experiencing barriers to attaining and retaining employment suitable to their skills, education, and experience.

Employment For People with Disabilities

Strategic priority description	Employment and labour market outcomes are improved for people with disabilities[4]
Addressing systemic change	Access to employment opportunities is a vital building–block for full participation in society. Studies show that employees with disabilities are often more productive, dependable, and loyal to an organization and that staff retention is 72% higher than their co-workers without disabilities. By providing employment opportunities to people with disabilities, not only are we giving them a pathway out of poverty, we are helping employers access a virtually untapped talent pool to increase their likelihood of getting the right person for the job and will have a positive impact on Ottawa's economic environment.

Funding categories and examples	• Programs and projects that lead to employment and improved labour market outcomes, including investments in:
	  – Employment related social enterprises
	  – School to work transition for youth
	  – Job finding and retention (including workplace support)
	  – Career mentorship, counseling and coaching
	  – Workshops and education for employers about adapting their workplaces to better integrate people with disabilities
	
	• Research into best practices, tools, and promising approaches to improve labour market outcomes and to develop employer case studies on the benefits of creating inclusive workplaces
	
	Note: For programs, services and social enterprises that lead to employment, employment is required to: adhere to Ontario Labour Standards i.e. minimum wage or greater, health and safety standards, etc.; ensure dignity of choice; and foster an inclusive workplace and/or community.

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[4] "People with disabilities" includes individuals aged 15 and over with sensory, physical, intellectual, developmental, learning, and/or mental health issues who are experiencing barriers to attaining and retaining employment suitable to their skills and experience level.

Beginnings and Transitions

Strategic priority description	**Community members have access to literacy and skill development to improve employment and overcome barriers**
Addressing systemic change	Access to employment opportunities is a vital building–block for full participation in society. The current job market relies on individuals having not only appropriate skills for the workforce, but also having their basic needs met.
Funding categories and examples	- Programs and projects that lead to employment and improved labour market outcomes, including investments in: – Employment related social enterprises – School to work transition for youth – Job finding and retention (including workplace support) – Career mentorship, counseling, and coaching – Workshops and education for employers about adapting their workplaces to become more inclusive - Programs and projects addressing employment adjacent needs like literacy or service navigation to address health barriers *Note: For programs, services and social enterprises that lead to employment, employment is required to: adhere to Ontario Labour Standards (i.e. minimum wage or greater, health and safety standards, etc.); ensure dignity of choice; and foster an inclusive workplace and/or community.*